

Mission

The Growth Management Program:

- passes through to counties and cities planning under GMA grant funds to support their compliance with the requirements of the law;
- provides training and technical assistance to counties and cities planning under GMA;
- coordinates the adoption of rules guiding development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations;
- provides state review and comment on county and city comprehensive plans and development regulations implementing GMA;
- coordinates state agency actions and policies related to managing growth;
- represents CTED in development of state water policy;
- produces data and analysis about the status and effect of GMA planning;
- advocates for reliance on the GMA framework for planning and program decisions;
- provides staff support to ongoing legislative review and refinement of GMA;
- provides staff support to the Governor and the Land Use Study Commission;
- provides dispute resolution services to local governments and state agencies;
- provides recommendations to the Governor about possible state appeals to Growth Hearings Boards and courts. Our statutory authority is primarily in Chapter 36.70A RCW and portions of Chapter 43.63 RCW.

Purpose

We do this because the Legislature has chosen:

- to maintain and enhance forest, farming, fishing, and mining industries in spite of competing pressures to shift production of commodities elsewhere;
- to fully use existing infrastructure before committing to build more;
- to avoid or prevent environmental degradation rather than to repair it;
- to require new growth and development to either pay for the facilities and services it requires or be consciously subsidized;
- to reduce uncertainty related to land use and development investments by making and subsequently relying on decisions about intended intensity, density and character of development and the level of public services to be provided;
- to require that land use decisions be made by counties and cities within a statewide procedural and policy framework, consistent with available funding, a long-term vision, and with early and ongoing public involvement;
- to increase coordination in planning for development.

Furthermore, under the GMA, the Legislature found that uncoordinated and unplanned growth were a "threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state." (RCW 36.70A.010) The GMA then lays out a new approach, based on broad goals for the following topics:

1. Urban Growth
2. Sprawl Reduction
3. Transportation
4. Housing
5. Economic development
6. Property rights
7. Development permits
8. Natural resource industries
9. Open space and recreation
10. Environment
11. Citizen participation and coordination
12. Public facilities and services
13. Historic preservation
14. Shoreline Management